

CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A vehicle door module comprising:
a door panel;
a bracket coupled to said door panel, said bracket comprising a hinge portion which permits said bracket to flex; and
a handle support coupled to said bracket.
2. The vehicle door module as recited in claim 1, wherein said hinge portion comprises a flexible strip.
3. The vehicle door module as recited in claim 1, wherein said hinge portion is biased either towards or away from said door panel.
4. The vehicle door module as recited in claim 1, wherein said bracket comprises an annular body portion, a latch attachment portion that transversely extends from a plane defined by said annular body portion to secure a door latch, and a handle support arm that extends at least partially within said plane.
5. The vehicle door module as recited in claim 4, wherein said latch attachment portion comprises a sheathed portion that extends perpendicularly from said latch attachment portion.
6. The vehicle door module as recited in claim 4, wherein said latch attachment portion comprises arcuate hooks for securing said door latch.

7. The vehicle door module as recited in claim 1, wherein said bracket comprises an annular body portion, a latch support attachment portion that transversely extends from a plane of said annular body portion to secure a latch support, and a handle support arm that extends within said plane.

8. The vehicle door module as recited in claim 7, wherein said latch support attachment portion comprises arcuate hooks for securing said latch support.

9. A method of mounting a vehicle door module within a door shell comprising:
- (a) flexing a hinge portion of a bracket relative to a door panel;
 - (b) locating the door panel in a door shell;
 - (c) aligning a handle support that is attached to the bracket with an attachment portion of the door shell; and
 - (d) unflexing the hinge portion to locate the handle support in an installed position.
10. The method as recited in claim 9, wherein step (a) further comprises flexing the hinge portion to a first position relatively closer to the door panel.
11. The method as recited in claim 9, wherein step (a) further comprises holding the hinged portion at the first position.
12. The method as recited in claim 9, wherein step (d) further comprises locating the handle support to an installed position adjacent to a door shell attachment portion.
13. The method as recited in claim 9, wherein step (d) further comprises unflexing the bracket from the first position to a second position relatively farther from the door panel.
14. The method as recited in claim 9, further comprising a step (e) connecting the handle support to an outside door handle.